Thoreau's life and writings. But his own irresolutions and conflicts tended to fragment the impulse into sometimes bewilderingly multi-layered rhetoric.

What is one to think about Milder's method and conclusion? On the one hand, it can scarcely be denied that it's interesting and at times illuminative to trace the connections between Thoreau's psycho-history and his writings: interesting because most of us are fascinated by biography, illuminative because an understanding of an author's psychological landscape (Wimsatt's intentional fallacy notwithstanding) is helpful in navigating his or her books. But on the other hand, isn't it a commonplace that texts bear the signatures of their authors? And isn't every human being necessarily engaged in the process of figuring out how to relate to his or her experience? If so, one wonders why it's necessary to spend almost three hundred pages (which sometimes risk smothering the reader in minutiae) to underscore the points. Moreover, one may ask whether the "empirical critic's" choice to focus on the fragmentation of an author's thought and writings doesn't trivialize the very real possibility of a philosophical message arising from the text that, at the end of the day, is much more important than psycho-biographical analysis. In fairness to Milder, he is not a philosopher. He is a literary critic writing (presumably) for other literary critics, and the language game he plays has a set of norms and priorities and expectations not necessarily shared by players of the philosophical language game. His analysis of Thoreau's rhetoric helps us understand the complexity of the authorial process, even if it may not in the long run shed much light on the ideas which that process births.

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO WILLIAM JAMES. Ruth Anna Putnam, ed.
(New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Editor Ruth Anna Putnam uses Jacques Barzun's metaphor from his 1983 book, A Stroll with William James, to describe the goals of The Cambridge Companion to William James. "The contributors to his volume will, I trust, prove to be stimulating, enlightening companions to readers who undertake their own stroll with William James" (p. 1). But where readers could expect Barzun's stroll to include an avid appreciation, a cultural overview, a personal interpretation of theoretical issues, and an informal style, the walk with James in Putnam's book is more earnest in character. Moreover, the eighteen essays do "not attempt ... a single interpretation of James's philosophy" (pp. 9-10), but they all share high standards of rigor and insight. The essays are directed toward an audience of philosophers or philosophical thinkers in related fields, and most are written by philosophers. They cover a variety of psychological, epistemological, and religious topics from James's mature works, ranging from Owen Flanagan's assessment of his theory of consciousness to T. L. S. Sprigge's defense of James against the criticisms of G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, and Richard R. Niebuhr's observations about the "knowledge of acquaintance" (p.223) that form the basis of religious experience.
Readers will get a rich sampling of contemporary interpretations of James, although they will detect a leaning toward a realist reading of James, as in, for example, Christopher Hookway's argument that James's pragmatism shares the philosophical orientation of Peirce's realism even if he applied it more widely and with less deference to science; and in Hilary Putnam's emphasis on James's proposition that "in the absence of 'mirrored matter' ideas are just 'flat psychological surface,'" (p. 175). Richard Rorty does, however, walk a distinctly different path; he sees James beginning to blend the "sharp line between the cognitive and the noncognitive," between the quest for truth and for happiness (p. 90). And he calls "this fuzzy overlap ... 'romance,'" which is full of "a faith in the future possibilities of mortal humans" (p. 96)—and which is where he wants to push the legacy of pragmatism in our own time. James Conant offers a kindred notion that, after his struggle with Josiah Royce, James gave up his "ambition" to develop a "theory of truth," and instead contented himself with "proposing la live mental attitude" (p. 199).

There is a striking prevalence of interest in religion and morality in these essays. Bruce Wilshire speaks of James's "breathtaking intimacy [with] the material world" (p. 103) based on the deeply experiential, naturalistic, "archaic (and] mythic" (p. 121) qualities of James's religious sensibilities. David Lamberth evaluates how James's emphasis on intimacy, the feeling of being "at home in . . . fragments of the world" (p. 239), is a linchpin of his mature philosophy, because it allows radical empiricism, with its pluralism, sociality, and emphasis on "dynamic relations in the world . . . to aspire to the mantle of spiritualistic philosophy" (pp. 244-45). Graham Bird presents James's morality as a philosophy rejecting reliance on both "a supernatural moral order" and "a crude naturalism;" his in between position emphasizes that "moral properties are real" because of their naturalistic development (p. 280). Ruth Anna Putnam identifies James as a moralist whose highest ideal was to encourage the "largest total universe of good" and as a pluralist because the particular goods are "left unspecified" (p. 292). Harvey Cormier issues a defense of James against the moral critiques of Antonio Gramsoi and Cornel West, who criticize James's pragmatism for insufficient moral outrage with the status quo. He argues that not only was James highly committed to social justice, but also his psychological understanding of how humans change their minds can help prevent reaction; in addition, his philosophy provides a "corridor" among diverse views that can provide a "common ground on which to argue" (p. 361).

Some of the essays offer useful correctives. For example, Gerald Myers retrieves James's introspective method from virtual neglect and points out how he elevated the approach that recorded simple observations into a complex inferential process [of] 'retrospection,'" (p. 13) which can still be a valuable resource today. And Richard Gale shows how John Dewey incorrectly interpreted James's psychology to be more naturalistic—and in doing so painting him in his own image—and thus he slighted the religious intuitions James had about human psychology; to Gale, James is more "spooky" than Dewey or most other philosophers recognize (p. 67).
Although he is the only historian on the roster of contributors, David Hollinger writes a close textual analysis of James's famous scolding of William Clifford and leaves the reader with a significant philosophical proposition. He portrays James exaggerating his differences with Clifford in "The Will to Believe" in order to express his commitment the stark differences between scientific and religious ways of thinking; Hollinger argues that this position was a way-station on James's path toward a more secular approach to "religion within, rather than as an exception to . . . the pragmatist outlook" (p. 81). Literary critic Ross Posnock's essay is actually more explicitly historical in his account of James's "fermentative influence" on a host of important students (p. 324). James was a hero to the modernist generation for "expressing moral outrage ... [and] contempt for smugness and certainty" (p. 327). For example, Posnock documents the ways Walter Lippmann used pragmatism but misread his teacher as he developed an overconfidence in science; and he shows that W. E. B. DuBois drew on the spirit of William James not just for his theory of a racial "double consciousness," but also because his "metaphor of crisis" is built on a picture of "Chance in human conduct" (p. 340). The literary analysis of Jessica Feldman offers a culture studies perspective as she hones in on the metaphors and theories in James that depict domesticity, ranging from the parallels between his anonymous autobiographical reference during his crisis and the veiled voice of women in an era of "separate spheres," to his granting of a prominent place for temperament and sentiment in his philosophical orientation; comparing James to the novelist Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard, Feldman argues that "Home is an important context in which to consider James's thought" (p. 305).

Readers will not find in this volume a distinct call for a new overarching perspective on James's work. What unites the essays, however, is their high-quality analysis of various parts of James's philosophical works.

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Reissued Texts and Scholarly Resources: James, Peirce and Whitehead.

Recently a colleague in the philosophy department here at the Air Force Academy decided to embark upon a systematic reading of the works of William James. I showed him the two volume set Library of America devoted to James but I suggested he get the Harvard critical edition. We were both stunned to find out that except for the paperback version of Pragmatism, the rest of the Harvard edition is out of print and unavailable. So beyond convenience and low price there is a need for presses like Nebraska, Fordham and Vanderbilt to reissue, with helpful new prefaces and introductions, the classical primary and secondary works of main line American philosophers. A year ago in NEWSLETTER #77 I called attention to the reissue of Josiah Royce's The Philosophy of Loyalty (by Vanderbilt UP) and four volumes by or on William James. Here are four more welcome reissues.